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Myanmar

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I. Introduction

1. During the First Cycle of UPR, the promotion and protection of human rights in Myanmar was reviewed on 27 January 2011 at the meeting of the Working Group on UPR.

2. The Constitutional Government assumed the State responsibility in Myanmar in March 2011, and a series of positive political developments followed. The reform process undertaken by the Government has largely contributed to further promotion and protection of human rights in the country. At the First Cycle of UPR, Myanmar received 190 recommendations and has implemented not only the accepted recommendations but also other recommendations along with her political developments. This report reflects the state of current political, social and economic situation in Myanmar.

II. Methodology and consultation process

3. This report was prepared in accordance with the Human Rights Council's resolution A/HRC/RES/16/21 dated 12 April 2011.

4. The Report Drafting Steering Committee was formed with the Union Minister for Home Affairs as Chairman, the Union Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Attorney General of the Union as Vice-Chairmen and representatives from various departments as members. The Report Drafting Working Committee headed by the Attorney General of the Union was also established and consisted of representatives from various departments. To facilitate the work of the Working Committee, a drafting committee and a committee on relations with organizations were also set up.

5. During the drafting process, suggestions given by the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC) on its independent basis, were taken into account. Consultations with the United Nations agencies and civil societies in Myanmar were also organized for their opinions and suggestions.

6. A number of workshops relating to raising UPR awareness and the recommendations were organized. A workshop was held in June 2013 jointly organized by the MNHRC and the Regional Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Bangkok. A UPR related training workshop was held in November 2014 jointly organized by the MNHRC and Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (Sweden). A workshop on exchange of experience of UPR process was also organized with the Attorney General Office of Australia in January 2015. Officials and representatives from departments concerned and civil society organizations participated in these workshops and trainings. It effectively contributed to the Myanmar's second cycle UPR process.

III. Developments since the first cycle of Universal Periodic Review

A. Democratization process

7. In the 2008 Constitution, legislative, executive and judicial powers are separated and shared among the Union, Regions, States and Self-Administered Areas of the country observing the principles of democracy and check and balance. Since the democratic government led by President U Thein Sein took office, Myanmar has been undertaking step by step reform processes towards a democratic state. The international community has acknowledged and supported such democratic reforms, and some countries have lifted or

relaxed the economic sanctions imposed on Myanmar. Chapter 8 of the Constitution guarantees fundamental rights of citizens in line with international human rights standards. Section 377 allows citizens to apply to the Supreme Court of the Union in line with the Law Relating to the Application of Writs, 2014. In accordance with Sections 296 and 378 of the Constitution, Section 16 of the Union Judiciary Law, and Section 3 of the Law Relating to the Application of Writs, the Supreme Court of the Union has the power to issue the Writ of *Habeas Corpus*, the Writ of *Mandamus*, the Writ of Prohibition, the Writ of *Quo Warranto*, and the Writ of *Certiorari*.

B. Reform process – political, socio-economic and administrative reforms

1. Political reform

8. As the first wave of reform, the state responsibility was entrusted with the democratically elected government. Myanmar nationals and ex-Myanmar living abroad for various reasons were invited to return and are now participating in the nation-building process. Furthermore, amnesties were granted on various occasions enabling prisoners to join others in nation-building tasks. To fill the vacant constituencies by-elections were held in April 2012. Those who won in the by-elections have become members of the Parliaments.

9. As the second wave, the political, socio-economic, administrative and private sector reforms have been implemented. The third wave reform is to accelerate momentum of the reforms in the said sectors and to further fulfill socio-economic needs of the people with participation of all ministries.

10. A Reform Steering Committee led by the President was formed on 9 August 2013 to expedite the reform process. The Vice-Presidents and Union Ministers at the Office of President are also members of the Committee.

11. During the tenure of the Government, ceasefire agreements were reached with 14 ethnic armed groups. It is unprecedented for a transitional democratic state like Myanmar to reach such a number of agreements in a short span.

2. Socio-economic reform

12. The second wave reform focused on the socio-economic development and poverty alleviation to halve by 2015.

13. Laws on economy, which were not in line with the current situation, were amended or repealed. New laws were also promulgated. To attract more foreign direct investment, the Union of Myanmar Foreign Investment Law, 1988 was substituted with the new Foreign Investment Law, 2012. Likewise, investor-friendly Myanmar Citizens Investment Law, 2013 was promulgated substituting Myanmar Citizens Investment Law, 1994. Similarly, the Special Economic Zone Law, 2014 was promulgated.

14. Measures have been taken for implementing priorities of the current Five-Year Plan and for realization of ASEAN Economic Community by 2015, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other Human Resource Development Goals, graduating from the Least Developed Countries status, developing towards intellectual based economy and reaching the same level with other developing countries by 2020 within the Framework for Economic and Social Reform.

15. The Government has a target of attaining annual economic growth of 7.7 %, alleviating poverty, and proportionate development of service sector.

3. Administrative reform

16. In accordance with Section 17 (a) and Section 199 of the Constitution, executive power of the Union is shared among Union, Regions and States and Self-Administered Areas. As such, the executive power is exercised by the Union government which is composed of the President, Vice-Presidents, Union Ministers and Attorney General of the Union whereas the Region/State Government is headed by a Chief Minister. Self-Administered Area is led by its chairperson.

17. Administrative reform was prioritized in the reform process pursuant to Nay Pyi Taw Accord adopted at the Myanmar Development Cooperation Forum held in January 2013.

18. To accelerate momentum for the administrative reform, a 27-member Administration Reform Coordination Committee headed by a Union Minister at the Office of the President, Administrative Reform Process Working Group and Secretariat were established on 1 May 2014.

19. The Administrative Reform Coordination Committee ensures good governance and clean government as well as public service-oriented administration in fulfilling social and economic needs of the people. In addition, it places great emphasis on developing a competency framework for civil servants, decentralization, cutting red-tape and implementing the administrative reform policies. The Committee has collaborated with relevant ministries to carry out 142 recommendations suggested by Region and State governments on administrative reform in which 78 are to be implemented without delay for gaining quick wins, 55 are to be undertaken pursuant to existing laws, and 9 are to be made adaptable to current situation. The Administrative Reform Coordination Committee held meetings in February and April 2015 to develop a Framework for Administrative Reform looking forward to long-lasting reform process. Representatives from the Union level and Region and State level participated in the meetings. Accordingly, the national consultative workshop on developing a Framework for Administrative Reform was held in May 2015 and it is now in the process of adoption.

20. Myanmar has been implementing UNDP's Effective Local Governance for Sustainable Inclusive Community Development and Democratic Governance and Development Effectiveness under the Country Programme Action Plan- CPAP (2013–2015) in collaboration with international organizations.

21. In doing so, the first ever national workshop on Good Local Governance was organized in August 2013 and then the Local Governance Mapping process was carried out in 58 townships of 14 States and Regions in cooperation with UNDP. The outcome of the process was implemented through the second national workshop organized in February 2015. The findings were distributed to States and Regions by the General Administration Department.

22. The Ward and Village-Tract Administration Law, 2012 was promulgated and under the law administrators for Wards and Village-tracts were elected. The structure of departments and Police Force were reformed. The administrative reforms were conducted in cooperation with international organizations.

C. Government efforts on promotion and protection of human rights

23. Since 2011, law review has been made. Till date, Myanmar has amended, repealed and enacted a total of 171 laws in accordance with the Constitution and international human rights conventions to which Myanmar is a state party.

24. As a member of the United Nations promoting and protecting human rights, Myanmar has been working to become a state party to the remaining core international human rights treaties. In addition, Myanmar has conducted rounds of human rights dialogues with Japan, the United States of America and the European Union for three years.

D. Establishment of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission

25. Myanmar formed an 18-member Human Rights Committee in 2000 with the Minister for Home Affairs as Chairman. In 2007, the committee was reconstituted with a 21-member body to enhance its function. Based on the positive political developments, the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC) was established by the Presidential Order in September 2011 comprising 15 members from different professions and various national races. In compliance with the Paris Principles, the enabling law–the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission Law–was enacted by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (Union Parliament) on 28 March 2014. The law aims to create a society where human rights are respected and protected in recognition of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, among others. In accordance with the law, the MNHRC was reconstituted with 11 members on 24 September 2014 and it is now carrying out its mandates independently and effectively for the promotion and protection of human rights.

IV. Implementation of recommendations

A. Ratification, accession and implementation of core international human rights conventions/treaties (Recommendations 104.1, 104.2, 104.3, 104.4, 104.6, 104.7, 104.8, 106.7, 106.11)

26. Out of 9 core international human rights treaties, Myanmar acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on 15 July 1991 and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) on 22 July 1997.

27. To demonstrate Myanmar Government's efforts in the promotion and protection of human rights and on the implementation of the recommendations received during the First Cycle of UPR, Myanmar has become a state party to the Convention on the Persons with Disabilities on 7 December 2011 and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography on 16 January 2012.

28. As a testimony to demonstrate its political will, Myanmar has been doing its utmost to become a state party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw has already approved in this regard. Myanmar will be a signatory to the International Covenant shortly.

29. At the same time, Myanmar is at the final stage to sign the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

30. In addition, Myanmar is studying to become a signatory to the remaining international human rights treaties including the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT). In this regard, Myanmar is cooperating with international partners.

B. Civil and political rights (Recommendations 104.10, 104.18, 104.19, 104.37, 104.55, 104.57, 105.7, 106.45, 107.65)

1. Reforms in justice sector

31. For judicial independence and separation of powers in legislative, executive and judiciary sectors, Sections 300, 301, 309 and 310 of the Constitution require the Chief Justice of the Union or Judges of the Supreme Court of the Union and Judges of the High Court of the Region or State to be free from party politics and to have retired from civil service otherwise.

32. Practicing judicial independence is clearly stated in Section 19 of the Constitution and Section 7 of the Union Judiciary Law and Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct is applied as a model. In 2012, Supreme Court of the Union issued directives to all courts to practise fair, efficient and effective judicial functions. Workshops were also held to promote the system and best practice and experience on international norms and standards were exchanged.

33. To promote independent judicial system, the Supreme Court of the Union has been implementing a 3-year project since December 2014. The project aims at maintaining peace and rule of law, promoting a credible and reliable judicial system, access to due legal process, passing judgments without delay and promoting legitimacy of courts.

2. Media reforms

34. In his address to the First Session of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw held on 30 March 2011, the President stated that outdated laws on news and periodicals will be revised in conformity with the Constitution.

35. In media reform, the press censorship was abolished in August 2012. Following the permission to private newspapers, 14 dailies and 250 journals have been in circulation since April 2013. The Press Censorship and Registration Board was dissolved in January 2013.The Printing and Publishing Enterprise Law and Rules were adopted in 2014. The Interim Myanmar Press Council was formed with 28 journalists in coordination with the Ministry of Information. The News Media Law was adopted in March 2014. To date, Dispute and Complaint Settlement Committee under the Myanmar Press Council received a total of 144 complaints, and 85 cases were settled. Nineteen foreign news agencies have opened their offices in Myanmar.

36. Training and workshops are conducted in cooperation with international organizations such as International Media Support (IMS), UNESCO, Canal France International (CFI), Deutsche Welle (DW AKADEMIE). Information on laws, procedures of civil and military courts and guidelines relating to the protection of journalists and media personnel is widely disseminated. The Interim Myanmar Press Council has held Myanmar Media Development Conference for 3 times from 2012 to 2015.

37. Draft Television Law is under discussion at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. Myanmar Motion Picture Law is being amended in cooperation with Myanmar Motion Picture Association.

3. Freedom of association and assembly

38. The civil society organizations in Myanmar have been playing a significant role and contributing to the development of the community and the nation. Relevant officials from Union Ministries, representatives from States and Regions, Members of Parliament, representatives of NGOs, INGOs and CSOs and general public have held a total of 18 consultations transparently in drafting the Registration of Associations Law. The law aims

at allowing the formation of associations and conducting their activities freely. The law came into force in 2014. Under the law, registration is voluntary. As of 15 May 2015, there are 736 NGOs/CSOs and 120 INGOs in Myanmar. The Rules has come into effect on 5 June 2015.

39. After the Labour Organization Law entered into force in 2012, a number of employers' and employees' organizations were formed. As of 26 May 2015, there are 1601 basic employees' organizations, 71 township level organizations, 7 employees' federations, 6 state and region level employees' organizations, 28 basic employers' organizations, 1 township level employers' organization and 1 employers' federation.

40. The Law Relating to the Rights of Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession, 2012 was promulgated. Since then, people have exercised their right to stage demonstrations and gatherings in accordance with the law. On 24 June 2014, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw passed amendments to the Law and enacted Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Law No. 26 in order to provide more space for freedom of assembly. A total of 1431 assemblies and gatherings have been organized as of 30 April 2015. Public places for demonstrations were designated in Yangon, Mandalay, Ayeyawady and Sagaing Regions.

C. Promotion and protection of education, healthcare, economic, social and cultural rights (Recommendations 104.5, 104.13, 104.14, 104.16, 104.17, 104.20, 104.42, 104.43, 104.44, 104.45, 104.46, 104.47, 104.48, 104.62, 104.63, 105.6)

1. Right to education

41. Myanmar has an area of 261,228 square miles. There are 44,404 basic schools throughout the country. The average distance from a house to a school is about 1.39 miles. The Government is committed to provide quality and affordable education including providing adequate learning opportunities. Therefore, the literacy rate has increased from 95.08% in 2011–2012 academic years to 95.20% in 2014–2015.

42. The Government continues to allocate a significant amount of its budget to education sector. The Ministry of Education received a budget of 266.70 billion Kyats in 2010-2011. In 2014–2015 it received 1,158.43 billion Kyats. Education budget was further increased to 12,299.01 billion Kyats in 2015–2016 academic years.

43. Myanmar has been implementing Free and Universal Primary Education Programme. Starting from 2011–2012 academic year, primary and secondary students received a complete set of text books, exercise books, stationeries and school uniforms. From 2015–2016 academic year, the Government will provide text books for high school students. New schools are opened and teachers are appointed where necessary.

44. As a result of annual school enrolment campaigns, the enrolment of Kindergarten students has reached 98.77% in 2014–2015 academic year. All Inclusive Education Programme for 2013–2015, encompassing all students including children with disabilities was adopted.

45. Private sector involvement in education is growing. On 2 December 2011, the Private School Registration Law was promulgated. On 30 April 2012, Rules for the Private School Registration Law was issued. In 2014–2015 academic year, there are 280 private schools in the country.

46. A scholarship programme for students in need was introduced. In 2014–2015 academic year, 16,022 students received scholarship from the Government. Moreover, 24 oversea scholarships by the President were granted in 2015.

47. In order to meet the international education standards, the Ministry of Education is collaborating with UNICEF, JICA and ADB in developing new curriculum.

48. Human rights education is included in school curriculum since 2014–2015 academic year.

49. The Government has collaborated with civil society organizations to set up mobile schools for children who live far from the school and for migrant children. During 2013–2014 academic year, 12 mobile schools were first introduced for 416 students. The Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association has also opened 664 pre-school facilities to provide care for under five-year-old children. Charity Night Schools are permitted to open for dropouts.

50. To achieve comprehensive development in education sector, a Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR) was launched in 2013 and completed in June 2014. It contains Rapid Assessment, In-depth Analysis and Development of Education Sector Plan. The Ministry is also drafting National Education Sector Plan (2016–2020).

51. From 2011–2012 to 2015–2016 academic year, the Ministry of Education has signed 108 MOUs and MOAs with Universities and Institutions from 18 countries to cooperate in the field of education.

2. Right to health

52. As it is fundamental to realisation of human rights, the Government of Myanmar places right to health as its one of the priorities.

53. Improving access to and quality of health is high on the Government agenda. Accordingly, the Government has increased budget on health expenditure 8 folds from 2010–2011 to 2015–2016. Myanmar is working towards achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and reducing financial burden on the poor and vulnerable groups.

54. Myanmar is among the few countries in the world where the incidence rate of HIV infection among adults 15 to 49 years old has decreased by more than 50 percent over the last decade (UNAIDS Global Report 2012) and the prevalence among the general population is less than one percent. The Government has been extending care and support for people living with HIV and their families as well as orphans and vulnerable children. In 2012, 1,683 orphans and vulnerable children were provided with care and support.

55. The Government is committed to increasing health budget incrementally aiming to reach 5% of GDP by 2016. Between 2012 and 2013 Government contribution to HIV-related funding increased almost 5-fold from US$ 0.7 million to US$ 4.1 million. Additional US$ 5 million domestic budget allocation for HIV medicine including ARV, and US$ 1 million for methadone maintenance therapy were already committed constituting 150% increase in domestic funding.

56. The Ministry of Health is committed to eliminate new HIV infections among children by 2015 and keep their mothers healthy to raise them. Regarding improvement of maternal and child health including newborn and reducing maternal, neonatal and child mortality and morbidity, a lot of inputs have been invested. Although trends of maternal mortality ratio and under five mortality rates have been decreasing, there is still a need to reach targets set in MDGs. Essential health service package for maternal, new born and children is identified for ensuring access to comprehensive quality health services and clinics for under five have been opened up to sub Rural Health Centers all over the country.

57. Since 2011, 133 new hospitals, 138 Rural Health Centers and 985 Sub Rural Health centers were established. Patients who need emergency treatments are provided free of charge at the public hospitals. Quality of private healthcare services are being supervised.

58. The health related laws such as Traditional Drug Law, Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association Law, Private Medical Law, Eye Donation Law, The Law Amending National Food Law, The Law Amending Poisons Act, Private Healthcare Services Law and National Drug Law were promulgated since 2011.

59. The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law, 1993 has been reviewed with a view to providing options for voluntary treatment and access to harm reduction programmes.

3. Social and cultural rights

60. Sections 348 and 354 (d) of the Constitution guarantee the fundamental rights of the national races and safeguard their traditional cultures. On 24 February 2015, the Protection of National Races Law has been promulgated.

61. The essential step to achieve unity of all national races is to build a coherent social community in which all national races should be included and involved. To achieve this, the Government will continue to uphold respect for different cultures in States and Regions in order to preserve the cultural identities and the Union Spirit of the respective national races.

62. In primary schools, the Government has allowed the classes to teach in the languages of national races. To preserve and promote languages of national races, such classes are allowed outside of school hour for students of Kindergarten, First Grade and Second Grade.

4. Economic rights

63. To achieve extensive success and a long-term goal, the Government has formulated a Framework of Economic and Social Reforms (FESR) and strategies to achieve people-centered development, sustainable development and economic development through diverse investments.

64. The Government has carried out population and housing census from 29 March to 10 April 2014 in order to get accurate data which is essential for the development of the country. The census was first to be taken in its 30 years and it was carried out in cooperation with UNFPA and other development partnership organizations. The area where the census was unable to conduct is less than 1% of the country's territory and in terms of population ratio it represents just 2.34% of the total population.

65. The initial outcome of the census was released in August 2014 and the final result was officially released on 29 May 2015. According to the outcome of the census, the population of the country is 51.48 million.

66. According to the Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey, the poverty rate was 32.2% in 2005. The Government is targeting to halve the poverty into 16% by 2015. By 2010, it was reduced to 26%.

67. Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation Central Committee headed by the President was formed in order to attain the targeted rate. The Central Committee together with the Work-Committees in the respective State and Region are putting tremendous efforts to implement the programme of rural development and poverty alleviation. To assist the rural population in the comprehensive development of the fishery sector, the Ministry of Livestock, Fishery and Rural Development was reconstituted and assigned as the focal Ministry. It is implementing programs and projects and cooperating with development partners, civil society organizations and the rural populaces.

68. To bring about rural development of the country, three umbrella projects namely People-Centered Project in cooperation with the World Bank, the Rural Livelihood and Income Generating Project in collaboration with ADB and the Green Rural Fund Project are being implemented in 63,899 villages.

D. Promotion and protection of the rights of ethnic groups (Recommendations 104.12, 104.15, 104.24, 104.29, 104.51, 104.52, 104.53)

69. Section 22 of the Constitution stipulates that the Union shall assist to develop language literature, fine arts and culture of the national races; to promote solidarity, mutual amity and respect and mutual assistance among national races; to promote socio-economic development including education, health, economy, transport and communication of less-developed national races.

70. In Myanmar, immediately after its independence in 1948, emergence of armed conflicts, lack of peace and stability in various regions deterred the national races to fully enjoy their rights. During the tenure of the Constitutional government, on the belief that a solution to the issue of armed conflict through political means is possible, there are on-going negotiations with the ethnic armed groups. To date, there have been over 200 informal meetings and 50 official peace talks. Additionally, there have been over 100 interactions with civil society organizations and former anti-government groups.

71. On 3 May 2012, an 11-member Union Peace Implementation Central Committee headed by the President and 52-member Peace Implementation Work Committee headed by the Vice President were established. Over a period of four years, cease-fire agreements were reached with the 14 armed groups. All in all, a total of 38 peace agreements were signed at the Union Level and State Level between the Union Government and the 14 armed groups. These ceasefire agreements cover, among other things, regional development, human rights, protection of the environment, humanitarian assistance, anti-narcotic measures, education and the return of displaced persons. On 31 March 2015, the draft text of National Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) was signed.

72. Over 6,000 blacklisted persons were delisted. Political activists of Myanmar residing abroad were officially invited back home as part of the national reconciliation process. The Government facilitated their safe return. They are now contributing to the national reconciliation and development efforts.

73. To make use of technical assistance in the peace process, the Myanmar Peace Centre (MPC) was established under the guidance of the President. Intellectual and intelligentsia, academics are taking part in the peace process. Active participation of all stakeholders led the peace process move ahead and gain support from the international community. The MPC in collaboration with the international experts conducted a series of workshops to study possible establishment of a ceasefire observer group. Monthly community forums, youth and peace forums were held in Mandalay, Monywa, Taunggyi, Mawlamyaing, Pathein, Pyay, Taungoo and Nay Pyi Taw to educate youth about the implementation of peace process and to enable their participation.

E. Protection of the vulnerable groups (Recommendations 104.11, 104.21, 104.32, 104.34, 104.35, 104.36, 104.39, 105.3, 105.8, 105.9, 106.43)

1. Rights of the child

74. Myanmar acceded the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 16 July 1991 and became state party on 15 August 1991. Myanmar acceded to the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, child prostitution and child pornography on 16 January 2012.

75. Since 2011, Myanmar is in the process of redrafting the existing Child Law taking into account the views and suggestions made by civil society organizations. The Early Childhood Development Law, 2014 was promulgated and Rules are being drafted. Myanmar Early Childhood Promotion and Development Policy was adopted on 8 July 2014. Currently, Myanmar Children National Programme (2006–2015) has also been implemented. In 2009, the Third and Fourth Combined Report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child was submitted.

76. Measures on child protection are being made through institution-centered approach and community-centered approach. To promote voluntarism in child protection, 26 trainings of trainers were conducted in 26 districts and various cities in different regions and states. All in all, 1376 volunteers took part in child protection.

77. To effectively prevent under-age recruitment to the military forces, a MOU was signed between the Government of Myanmar and the United Nations Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting on 27 June 2012.

78. From 2011 to 2015, 722 under-age children were discharged from the military. Reintegration and rehabilitation of the discharged are conducted by respective ministries in cooperation with CSOs. Punitive actions were taken against 327 military personnel, comprising 50 officers and 277 other ranks who have falsely recruited the under-aged children. A total of 35 monitoring visits took place in 12 Regional Commands, 101 battalions and 4 Border Guard Forces. Public awareness posters and stickers were distributed to 324 townships and 292 educational signboards were put up.

79. Combined teams consisting of local administrators and personnel from the Ministry of Health are reaching the grass roots level and far flung areas to make sure every child has a birth certificate.

2. Women's right

80. Myanmar acceded to CEDAW on 23 November 1997. The Fourth and Fifth Combined Report was submitted to the CEDAW Committee in 2014. In implementing Article 2 of the Convention, Bill on Violence against Women is now in the drafting process.

81. Myanmar Women Affairs Federation is consistently working towards gender equality. Gender trainings and talks are conducted in respective State and Region. To protect violence against women, 10,608 talks on legal matters were conducted in ministries, States and Regions. There are 2 female Union Ministers, 7 female Deputy Ministers, 55 female Members of Parliament and 547 high-level officials are either appointed in the Government or elected at the Parliament. "Zero Tolerance Policy" is practiced on the violence against women. Myanmar Military service personnel are subject to military action as well as criminal action. Anyone convicted of rape and associated crimes were sentenced from a minimum of 10 years imprisonment.

82. Trafficked women are provided with victim support services and legal assistance.

83. Myanmar Women Affairs Federation has adopted the National Women Development Strategy 2013-2022 and is actively implementing it to promote and protect the rights of the women.

84. Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation has been conducting different training programmes which include vocational training, access to job opportunities, awareness raising on basic health care, environmental conservation and natural disaster. The Federation also helps women in finding jobs and providing small business loans with the aim of poverty reduction. The Federation helps girls-trafficked victims to reintegrate into society.

85. The Advancement of Women and Children Association was formed in 2013 to further advance the welfare and development of women and children.

3. Protecting and supporting elderly persons

86. The National Social Protection Strategy was introduced in December 2014 to provide further assistance to elderly persons. In implementing the strategy, a survey was conducted recently with the cooperation of INGOs for the feasibility of social pension.

87. The President granted financial and other assistance together with certificates to a total of 749 elderly persons above the age of 100 years in January 2015. A total of 500 million Kyats will be provided to the elderly persons above the age of 90 years for 2015-2016 financial year.

4. Promotion and protection the rights of persons with disabilities

88. Myanmar acceded to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on 7 December 2011. Based on the provisions of the Convention, the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2015 has been promulgated. To effectively implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Myanmar has incorporated promoting sign language, vocational training for persons with disabilities and awareness raising on disability related matters in its National Plan 2014-2015.

89. National Strategic Plan for Social Protection 2015-2022 has been developing and it will include measures for the benefit of persons with disabilities in terms of social protection.

F. Prevention and suppression of human trafficking (Recommendation 105.10)

90. Myanmar is a state party to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNCTOC) and its supplementary protocols namely Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children and Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Air and Sea.

91. The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law was promulgated in 2005 after several rounds of consultations with local and international legal experts.

92. Myanmar established the Central Body for Suppression of Trafficking in Persons in 2006. Three working groups are functioning under the Central body. The three working groups are the working group led by the Deputy Minister for Home Affairs on Prevention of Trafficking in Persons and Protection of Trafficked Victims, the working group led by the Deputy Attorney General on Legal Framework and Prosecuting Measures and the working group led by Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement on Repatriation, Reintegration and Rehabilitation of Trafficked Victims.

93. Currently, the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law is under intensive review to meet with today's challenges.

G. Cooperation with United Nations mechanisms (Recommendations 104.22, 104.23, 104.25, 104.26, 104.27, 104.28, 104.59, 104.61, 105.4, 105.5, 107.15, 107.23, 107.68)

94. On 10 December 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. To adopt the draft Declaration as a whole, Myanmar was the first to vote and voted for the Declaration. It represents Myanmar's landmark position in the history of United Nations in promoting and protecting of human rights.

95. Situation of human rights in Myanmar was first discussed in the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly in 1991. Similar discussion also took place at the Commission on Human Rights in 1992. The then resolutions emphasized on taking firm steps towards the establishment of a democratic state and allowing all citizens to participate freely in the political process. Myanmar has already accomplished these tasks. Despite Myanmar's positive developments in promotion and protection of human rights as well as political reform, it is still politicized and the resolutions continue.

96. Myanmar considers the Universal Periodic Review the most dependable mechanism for every country to discuss human rights issues on an equal footing in a constructive manner. Tangible progress made by Myanmar in the areas of human rights in recent years has allowed the country to stand tall in the region and beyond. It is high time to end the tabling of resolutions against Myanmar, based on the principles of universality, impartiality and non-selectivity in addressing human rights issues together with undeniable progress Myanmar has achieved.

97. Myanmar rejects and dissociates the resolutions, politicizing on Myanmar, on the situation of human rights in Myanmar adopted by the Human Rights Council and the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly. Nevertheless, Myanmar has received the visits of successive Special Rapporteurs including Mr. Tomas Ojea Quintana for 9 times and Ms. Yanghee Lee for 2 times so far. They were allowed to meet freely with the persons of their choice including prisoners and to visit the places they requested for. At the same time, Myanmar is providing all information requested by thematic Special Rapporteurs of the Human Rights Council.

98. Myanmar also receives shuttle visits by the UN Secretary General's Special Advisor on Myanmar in the spirit of cooperation with the United Nations.

99. Cooperation between Myanmar and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is continuing. The human rights officers of the OHCHR are organizing human rights awareness trainings with law enforcement agencies and other relevant stakeholders at States and Regions in the country since 2012.

H. Promotion and protection of labour rights (Recommendations 104.33, 104.41, 104.56, 104.60, 105.2, 106.40)

100. Since 2011, Myanmar enacted and amended over 171 laws. Some of them brought about better labour rights in the country. These laws include the Labour Organization Law, 2011, the Settlement of Labour Dispute Law, 2012, Minimum Wage Law, 2013, the Social Security Law, 2012, the Employment and Skill Development Law, and the Law Amending on Holidays and Leave Act, 1951.

101. The Law Amending the Ward and Village Tract Administration Law, 2012, criminalizes and penalizes forced labour. The Law stipulates one year imprisonment or 100,000 Kyats fine or both for any perpetrators.

102. New laws to replace the Work Man Compensation Act, 1923, the Oversea Employment Law, 1999, the Shops and Enterprises Act, 1951, the Wages Act, 1936, are in the process of drafting for amendments. The Prohibition of Employment Act, 1959, and Factories Act, 1951, are being amended. New Foreign Labour Law and Occupational Safety and Health Law are being drafted.

103. Myanmar has been cooperating with legal experts from international organizations including the International Labour Organization (ILO) in reviewing provisions embodied in existing labour laws so that rights and responsibilities of labourers be complied with the ILO standards and to develop a single law on rights and responsibilities of labourers.

104. Labour organizations have been formed after the promulgation of the Labour Organization Law in 2011. As of 26 May 2015, there are a total of 1715 basic labour and employers organizations, 7 labour federations and one employers federation. From 2012 to date, a total of 121 awareness raising workshops were organized in implementing the ILO Convention No. 87.

105. In accordance with the Settlement of Labour Disputes Law, 2012, 324 Coordination Committees and Arbitration Boards were established at township level and 14 Arbitration Boards an Arbitration Council were formed at State and Region level which composed of representatives from the government, labours and employers.

106. The Social Security Law, 2012 contains provisions for five insurance systems which were introduced in April 2014. The five insurance systems include health and social protection, family benefit scheme, temporary disability benefits, retirement pension benefits and family pension, unemployment, injury benefits and other social security. Among them, three insurance systems of health and social protection, assisting family and injury benefits have been implemented. Three hospitals, 94 social protection clinics and 44 departmental clinics in 110 townships involve in implementing the insurance systems. In addition, mobile medical unit has been formed to provide necessary healthcare services.

107. A MOU was signed between Myanmar and the International Labour Organization in 2002 in connection with ILO Convention No. 29. Pursuant to the MOU, a Supplementary Understanding was signed and a compliant mechanism with an ILO liaison officer was set up to address the complaints of forced labour. The Supplementary Understanding has been extended yearly and the current one is valid till 2016.

108. Joint Strategy for the Elimination of Forced Labour by 2015 was signed on 16 March 2012 by Myanmar and ILO. In light of Myanmar's efforts on elimination of forced labour, ILO had discontinued the remaining restrictions on Myanmar in 2013.

109. Myanmar acceded the ILO Convention No. 182: Worst Forms of Child Labour. A Technical Team for Child Labour was constituted and the four-year plan from January 2014 to December 2017 is being implemented within the framework of the Myanmar Programme on Elimination of Child Labour in cooperation with the ILO.

110. Myanmar became a member of International Organization for Migration on 27 November 2012. The monitoring committee for the overseas employment is working towards protection and promotion of the rights of the migrant workers.

111. Assistance to Myanmar migrant workers includes setting up of complaint mechanism in Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw with 24-hour service and Migrant Resource Centers in Yangon, Hpa-An, Myawaddy, Mawlamyaing, Magway and Kyaing Tone in cooperation with IOM, ILO. Furthermore, to facilitate job opportunities legally for

Myanmar migrant workers and to fully promote and protect the rights of migrant workers. 24-hour hotline for migrant workers is set up in the Yangon International Airport.

I. Rule of law
(Recommendations 104.9, 104.30, 104.31, 104.37, 104.38, 104.58, 107.31, 107.37, 107.38, 107.70)

112. In cooperation with the UNDP, a Country Programme of Action Plan is being drafted. The programmes for Rule of Law and Access to Justice under the title of Democratic Governance has been implemented. Supreme Court of the Union and the Union Attorney General's Office are cooperating with the relevant Ministries, Stakeholders, and CSOs for the said programmes. A national workshop on the Rule of Law was held in cooperation with the EU. At present, public awareness trainings, seminars and workshops on the rule of law and human rights education have been organized.

113. Myanmar delegation led by the Attorney General of the Union and another Myanmar delegation paid visits to South Africa for promotion and protection of the citizen rights and legal aid. In cooperation with the Union Attorney General's Office and UNODC, the National Workshop on Access to Legal Aid was held for improving the awareness on legal aid. The national legal experts, UNODC/ UNDP, international legal aid and South Africa legal aid experts and also the members of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw attended the said National Workshop. In accordance with the UN Principles and Guidelines, the Legal Aid Bill is being drafted.

114. A total of 52 State and other level workshops and seminars on rule of law and human rights, on promoting awareness and responsibility of Military and law enforcement officers, and on improving domestic legislation and judiciary were organized for law enforcement agencies since 2011.

115. The experts from IOM, UNICEF, and UNDP were invited to conduct the training for 549 township and district level judges from 2008 to 2015.

116. To cope with democratization process, Myanmar Police Force was adequately restructured and expanded.

117. Myanmar Police Force has been making efforts to incorporate human rights and people-centered approach in their missions. Training on crowd management, detention, search and improving police manuals and curriculums were carried out. The working method of Myanmar Police Force was being transformed into Community Policing.

118. Myanmar Police Force has been trained on crowd management with the assistance of the EU. The human rights officers from OHCHR are sharing their expertise on human rights with the Myanmar Police Force in 14 Regions and States.

119. Torture is a grave crime and prohibited by the Constitution. The Myanmar Jail Manual 1894, in its paragraphs 113 and 114, prohibit excessive use of force except to protect someone or to prevent unrest. If committed, the offender can be penalized.

120. Procedures and provisions on registration, identification, building, hygiene, clothes and bed, food, physical exercise, medical support, discipline and punishment, contact with outside, information and communication, education, religious, maintaining of prisoners, death, transfer of prisoners are adopted and provided in line with the Standard Minimum Rules of the UN.

J. Preparations for holding the 2015 general elections in a free, fair and transparent manner (Recommendations 105.1, 107.61, 107.63, 107.64)

121. The Union Election Commission (UEC) of Myanmar is an independent body and responsible for holding free and fair general elections in accordance with the provision of the Constitution and the Union Election Commission Law, 2012. The main functions of the UEC are to hold the general elections, to appeal and review on the decisions and orders of the electoral tribunal.

122. The Commission is composed of 17 members including representatives from Kachin, Kayar, Kayin, Chin, Mon, Bamar, Rakhine and Shan nationals. Its sub-commissions are represented at Region and State, District, Township and Village-tract levels.

123. The Commission has sent delegations to the United States of America, Australia, Belgium, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Korea, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand to further build on recommendations of experts from domestic and international observers and to learn the international experience on preparations for and successful holding of elections in line with international standards and best practices.

124. In cooperation with international partners, media, civil society organizations and political parties, the Commission is developing a strategic plan on educating the voters, on updating the voter-list with modern technology, on updating and amending electoral rules and regulations, on capacity building of the UEC and its sub-commissions.

125. In accordance with the lessons learnt from past experience, the Commission has initiated the code of conduct for election observers and also for political parties in close consultations with civil society organizations and political parties.

K. Cooperation with ICRC (Recommendations 106.39, 107.13, 107.14, 107.16, 107.34, 107.35)

126. Water and sanitation system in 3 prisons in 2011–2012 FY, 4 prisons in 2013–2014 FY and 15 prisons and camps in 2014–2015 FY has been upgraded in cooperation with ICRC.

127. The ICRC made 19 visits to 15 prisons and a camp in 2013, 29 visits to 16 prisons and 8 camps in 2014 and 19 visits to 7 prisons and 10 camps for up to May 2015 and had access to detainees of its choice.

128. The Office of Judge Advocate General (JAG) of the Ministry of Defence and the ICRC jointly organized a workshop on International Humanitarian Law in June 2014 and it was well represented by senior officials from the Military. The JAG has been cooperating with the ICRC to translate the 1949 Geneva Conventions into Myanmar language for official use.

129. To learn and exchange views on international standards in policing, use of police power and code of conduct for police officials, 11 workshops were jointly organized by Myanmar Police Force and ICRC from 2013 to 2015 in 2 States and 4 Regions.

130. For years, Myanmar and the ICRC have been launching prosthetics and orthotics projects in Myanmar including Karen State. Furthermore, the mobile prosthetics and orthotics teams have been reaching out villages. The ICRC's proposal for a Headquarter Agreement with the Ministry of Health is under consideration.

L. Efforts to enhance harmony, peace and dialogues among religions (Recommendation 104.40)

131. To enhance peace and harmony and dialogues among different faiths, Interfaith Friendship Group was formed with ten executive members representing various religions and the group was expanded down to village level. The group organizes collective activities on religious ceremonies and prayers on various occasions including victims of Japan Tsunami, Indonesia earthquake and disasters and talks on anti-violence and religious harmony.

132. The group also had interactions with the UN Special Advisor Mr. Vijay Nambiar and the UN Special Rapporteur for the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Ms. Yanghee Lee.

M. Progressive developments in Rakhine State (Recommendations 104.49, 104.50, 104.54)

133. Following the communal violence and to address the root cause of under development in Rakhine State, the Central Committee for Implementation of Stability and Development in Rakhine State led by a Vice President with six working committees was established in March 2013. The working committees are fulfilling their mandates on the rule of law, security and law enforcement, immigration and verification of citizenship, social and economic development, temporary resettlement and reconstruction and cooperation with UN agencies, international organizations and INGOs and strategic planning.

134. As citizenship is one of the key components of situation in Rakhine State, pilot verification project was launched in Myay Pon township in June 2014. As a result of this project, certificates for 97 citizens, 463 naturalizations were accorded to heads of the household. In terms of eligible household members including their children, the project has benefitted to 1933 individuals by the Citizenship Law, 1982.

135. Upon the completion of the pilot project, similar projects have been replicated in all townships of Rakhine State.

136. Temporary certificates, widely known as white cards, are issued to Bengalis, Indians, Pakistanis, Nepalese, Kokangs, Mon Wun, Kho Lone Li Shaw, Chinese, and the ethnic people in Wa Special Region 2 and 4. To facilitate the process of citizenship for temporary certificate holders, 31 March 2015 was declared as expiration date of temporary certificates. By the last day of returning the certificates, 397,497 certificates were deposited. Many certificates are believed to be lost or damaged or some certificate holders have already passed away or they are no longer in the area.

137. Those who have returned temporary certificates were given receipts and later were issued certificates which establish them as eligible persons to apply for citizenship verification process. This process has been in place since early June 2015. If those people who wish to become Myanmar citizens, they are eligible to apply for Myanmar citizenship.

N. Establishing Myanmar National Human Rights Commission in line with Paris Principles (Recommendations 106.23, 106.24, 106.25, 106.26, 106.27, 106.28, 106.29, 106.30)

138. The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw passed the Myanmar National Human Right Commission Law on 28 March 2014 and the Commission was reconstituted in line with Paris Principles. (Please also see paragraph 25).

O. Prisoners Scrutinizing Committee (Recommendations 107.41, 107.47, 107.48, 107.49, 107.50, 107.51, 107.52, 107.53, 107.54, 107.55, 107.56, 107.57, 107.58, 107.59, 107.60)

139. A total of five amnesties have been granted by the President during these years. As a result, 39,922 prisoners were released. Additionally, 6,649 prisoners were released by Section 401 (1) of Criminal Procedure Code.

140. On 8 May 2013 Political Prisoner Scrutinizing Committee was formed with 19 members led by a Union Minister at the President Office. The Committee was reconstituted twice for better functioning.

141. In granting a pardon and leniency for 5,020 prisoners, various prison terms were respectively reduced to shorter terms.

142. Among the amnesties, a total of 354 prisoners, including 341 male and 13 female were released in 8 times by the recommendation of the Committee.

143. In 5 amnesties, 60 prisoners and 12 detainees were released with the recommendations of the Scrutinizing Committee. The sentences on these prisoners penalized under Unlawful Association Act, Penal Code, Emergency Provision Act and Law Relating to Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession were dropped. There remain some prisoners who are still charged for other criminal offenses.

V. Other developments and initiatives in the field of human rights

A. Freedom of religion

144. In Myanmar, the Constitution guarantees every citizen's right to freedom of conscience and to freely profess and practice religion in accordance with the customs, culture, and traditions. It also guarantees freedom to practice the religions such as Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Animism. The State grants equal rights not only by the perspective of law but also the practice by the tradition. For those religion practised by the minority, Section 362 of the Constitution clearly states that "The Union also recognizes Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Animism as the religions existing in the Union at the day of the coming into operation of this Constitution."

145. If the ratio of religious buildings and its people is calculated, there is one Monastery or Nunnery for 736.80 people, one Christian Church for 444.65 people, one Islamic Mosque for 676.80 people, one Hindu Temple for 456.71 people and one building for Animism or other for 707.07 people. According to these figures, the ratio between the religious buildings and the number of people is found to be balanced.

146. Three bills and one law namely, the Religious Conversion Bill, the Myanmar Buddhist Women's Special Marriage Bill, the Monogamy Bill, and the Health Protection, Coordination on Increase of Population Law were drafted in line with international human rights standards. Three bills are under debate at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and the Law has been promulgated.

147. The purpose of the Health Protection, Coordination on Increase of Population Law is to alleviate poverty, improve living standards and ensure quality healthcare and develop maternal and child health. The purpose of the Religious Conversion Bill is to promote freedom of belief and to be systematic and transparent in any religious conversion in accordance with the Constitution and international norms and standards. Registration of conversion is voluntary and there is no penalty for those who do not wish to register for their conversion.

148. The Myanmar Buddhist Women's Special Marriage Bill has been drafted to preserve protection and equal rights on marriage, divorce, inheritance, property division and child custody between Myanmar Buddhist women and non-Buddhist men. The Monogamy Bill intends to prevent social problems as a consequence of non-monogamy marriage.

149. The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw promulgated Health Protection, Coordination on Increase of Population Law on 19 May 2015. The remaining bills are subject to a very close scrutiny by the peoples' representatives in the Hluttaws.

B. Complaint mechanisms

150. Myanmar National Human Rights Commission is vested with powers to verify and conduct inquiries in respect of complaints and allegations of human rights violations.

151. The complaints concerning forced labour can be filed with complaint mechanism jointly established by Myanmar and the International Labour Organization.

152. Myanmar Women Affairs Federation receives the written complaints of all types of violence against woman, including domestic violence. One can file complaints in person at various Counseling Centres.

153. Information on alleged violation of child rights can be reported to the Committee on Child Rights at various levels in Myanmar.

154. Any complaints on under-age recruitment of children can be filed with the complaint mechanism mentioned in paragraph 150 and also with the United Nations Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting Grave Violations against Children (UNCTFMR).

155. On land disputes, complaints can be sent to different levels of Land Use Management Committees.

156. On corruption, information on alleged corruption cases can be filed with the Myanmar Anti-Corruption Commission.

157. Moreover, allegations on misuse of authority, corruption by police personnel can be reported through 24-hour hotline to Myanmar Police Force.

158. In addition, any citizen who believes his or her rights are violated can file to respective ministries and committees at Hluttaws.

C. Formation of Assorted Land Use Management Committees and their activities

159. The Central Committee on Land Use Management led by a Vice President was formed to address the issues related to land acquisition while protecting public interest. Central (Nay Pyi Taw), Regions, States, Districts, Townships, Wards and Village-tracts Land Use Management Committees were formed to produce tangible results on land issues. Moreover, its Sub-Committee is taking follow up measures on the report of "Investigation Commission for the Prevention of Interest of People as a result of farmland and other land acquisition" of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

1. Renouncement of acquired lands and handover to rightful owners

160. The Land Use Management Sub-committee has scrutinized the land issues mentioned in the report sent by Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. Excess and unused lands after the completion of national projects are to be returned to their rightful owners. As of 15 June 2015, a total 120,283acres of land have to be handed over.

161. Furthermore, the Government further verifies complaints on additional 241,596 acres of land which were not covered by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's report. As of 15 June 2015, a total of 361,879 acres has been verified and out of which 356,055 acres have been handed over.

162. The Workshop on Land Use was held in March 2015 in Nay Pyi Taw to identify simple and effective processes on land acquisition related issues.

2. Progress in Land Use Management

163. Land Use Scrutinizing Committee composed of 25 members led by the Union Minister for Environmental Conservation and Forestry to effectively execute the Land Use Policy in Rural-Urban Development Plans and Investment Plans.

164. The Committee, with the cooperation of representatives from respective departments and organizations, and experts from local and international community including USAID, set up the framework and an action plan to develop the National Land Use Policy. Besides, the Committee is drafting a National Land Resources Law.

D. Death penalty

165. As a sovereign state, Myanmar exercises its criminal justice system independently. However, as and when appropriate, it always takes international norms and standards into careful consideration. In Myanmar, domestic legal framework allows death penalty for heinous crimes committed against the population and the community. Despite the legal basis, no death sentence has been carried out since 1988.

VI. National initiatives, achievements, good practices and challenges

166. People of Myanmar inspire for peace, stability and development. Additionally, strengthening democratic system, better enjoyment of human rights and maturity in exercising basic rights are high on Myanmar's agenda.

167. Despite the challenges, the homegrown democratic transformation has been incrementally achieved without any bloodshed. This has not been possible without people's

full support and participation. The international community recognizes and supports Myanmar's reform process.

168. Furthermore, the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) is expected to ink in a very near future to secure durable peace in Myanmar. The signing of NCA will pave the way for political dialogues which will lay down foundations for a peaceful, harmonious and prosperous society.

169. Since Myanmar has ushered in new era, its all-round reforms have contributed remarkably to promotion and protection of human rights of its people. Traditionally, discrimination of any kind is not accepted and exercised. Increasing space in freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and associations enable Myanmar to stand tall in the region and beyond. Its economic reform has brought more foreign investment and influx of tourists to Myanmar creating job opportunities and better living standards for the people.

170. Notwithstanding the substantial progress in Myanmar reform process, Myanmar needs to cope with rapid changes in domestic and international atmosphere, the need to strike a balance between rights and responsibilities and the need to resort to dialogue avoiding confrontation. As an infant democracy, Myanmar requires more time and political space to surmount such challenges.

171. While people in urban areas and well-educated strata of life are enjoying the fruits of reform, more needs to be done for the grassroots level. As 70% of total population resides in the rural areas, poverty alleviation and rural area development still remain as one of the challenges. Myanmar still needs to create more job opportunities for grassroots level, to foster skilled labours, to develop better education system and to provide adequate nutrition for all walks of life. Myanmar also recognizes the need for highly efficient human resources in the country and measures in this regard has been made.

VII. Conclusion

172. **Since the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has assumed the State responsibility, it has been undertaking reforms to promote human rights and socio-economic development of the people taking into consideration democratic transition and consolidating democratic foundations in all aspects. It is evident that considerable progress has been made. As Myanmar is enjoying steady economic growth, the Government has laid down and is pursuing focused economic development plans to graduate Myanmar from the LDC status.**

173. **Since Myanmar is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious country, the Government is consistently striving for them to live in harmony without discrimination against any races and nationalities. Myanmar has successfully hosted international and regional conferences and forums and has demonstrated its leadership in these events. In 2013, Myanmar successfully hosted the 27th Southeast Asia Games (SEA Games). In 2014, BIMSTEC summit, 24th and 25th ASEAN Summits were held in Myanmar successfully. In 2015, Myanmar successfully hosted the 7th CLMV and 6th ACMECS Summits. Those summits are the ones in which most of the heads of State and Government across the world have participated. The heads of State and Government have visited the country in recognition of the progress of Myanmar's reforms. The President of the Republic of the Union Myanmar, U Thein Sein has paid a series of State and working visits to other countries, further enhancing bilateral relations with them. Hence, it is the most successful period for Myanmar in the course of foreign relations.**

174. **Tangible progress in Myanmar's reform process has been well received and recognized by the international community. Meanwhile, further strengthening the cooperation between Myanmar and the international partners in the field of human rights is a prerequisite to crystallize democratic reforms. Genuine dialogue, constructive cooperation, equal and fair treatment are also essential. Myanmar has all along adhered to the principles of universality, objectivity and non-selectivity in addressing human rights issues of any nation in the world. At the same time, Myanmar has been urging all to strictly avoid the practice of double standard and politicization. Myanmar believes these principles constitute a firm basis for international cooperation in promotion and protection of human rights. Against this backdrop, it is evident that the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has made tangible progress on promotion and protection of human rights as well as on national reconciliation and rule of law. As such, any country-specific resolution on Myanmar should no longer exist.**

175. **Like any other nascent democracies, Myanmar is trying its best to overcome inevitable challenges by utilizing its own resources and strength. At a time when Myanmar is making every effort for a democratic society, the international community is expected to continue their constructive engagement with and assistance to Myanmar.**